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ABSTRACT

Problem definition appears to influence problem solving outcomes with respect to their quality. In order to determine whether or not families, confronted as a group by a series of possibly problematic situations, would engage in a problem definition phase, and whether or not the phase or its absence would be related to family members' satisfaction with family effectiveness, 48 white families, comprising natural parents and their ninth grade offspring, participated in an observational study. A number of dependent variables including social class; gender of child and maternal employment; family power structure; family problems; family affection patterns; and family communication patterns were examined for their relationship to individual family members' satisfaction. Family members' responses to 17 possibly problematic situations were coded in three categories: a solution perspective; an evaluation perspective; and an analytic perspective. Analyses of family members' scores, based on a model of the relationship between the dependent variables, showed that the model was not supported in a number of respects. Based on the mixed findings in the relationships between the dependent variables, and in the relationship of the dependent variables to family members' satisfaction, a revised model of family interaction was developed which incorporated a limited amount of feedback in family interactions. The results provided little evidence of the relationship between problem definition and family members' satisfaction. An illustration of the model of family interaction is included. (MCF)

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FAMILIES AND DEFINITIONS OF PROBLEMS*

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FAMILIES AND DEFINITIONS OF PROBLEMS

Problem solving has long been of interest to psychologists and sociologists. The former have been especially concerned with issues like the comparative advantages of group and individual problem solving (Kanekar and Rosenbaum, 1972; Shaw, 1932; Taylor and Faust, 1952), and how individuals go about solving problems (Dewey, 1910). Sociologists looked initially at affect changes during the problem solving process and the phasing of this process in problem solving groups (Bales, 1958; Bales and Strodtbeck, 1951). An underlying concern of both disciplines has been with what factors influence problem solving effectiveness. Individuals are continually facing problems, and groups are often formed to solve problems. On-going groups like families and work associates are also immersed in problems with which they must deal or which first involve their members and then become problems for the group as a whole.

In studying individuals, psychologists and sociologists have postulated a rational model as characterizing problem solving. According to this perspective, an individual in a situation at odds with her/his values or expectations follows a phase process (Dewey, 1910; Brim, 1962). The first phase of this process consists of her/him examining the various aspects of the situation in order to define the problem. After identifying and defining the problem, the individual collects relevant information and then inventories possible courses of action. After choosing one alternative, the individual takes action. S/he completes the problem solving phases by evaluating the consequences of the action.

Group problem solving has also been seen as following a phase process of "qualitatively different subperiods" during the process whereby group members interact to reach a group problem solving decision (Bales and Strodtbeck, 1951: 485). The phases bear some relation to the individual rational model phases. Bales and Strodtbeck, for example, hypothesized three phases. Groups began with <u>orientation</u> when members shared information they held relevant to understanding the problem decision. The group then moved on the <u>evaluation</u> when members presented alternative judgments as to the facts of the problem and strategies for dealing with it. The last phase was <u>control</u> of members and the environment in the interest of carrying out the solution decisions. Their research supported this schema.

The first phase of problem solving for both groups and individuals in which they define the problem is interesting with respect to problem solving itself and because of its conceptual links. Problem definition appears to influence problem solving outcomes with respect to their quality. Maier (1963) has found that the amount of time the individual spends considering various aspects of the situation s/he sees as problematical before going to a solution orientation, the better is the quality of the solution. Other studies in the small groups tradition showed that groups too are more effective when their members engage in problem diagnosis (Shure, Rogers, Larsen and Tassone, 1962) and precede task performance with discussions on the strategies the task solution requires. This is true even though groups tend to spend little time on possible strategies. The norm is for groups immediately to try to solve the problem. Apparently, taking time to think about the problem characteristics "unfreezes" individuals from usual patterns, so they may think of more effective solutions (Hackman and Morris, 1978: 22).

One might argue on the basis of the small amount of empirical evidence we have that since problem definition leads to higher quality solutions, members' satisfaction with them should also increase. In Hackman's study, members of groups in the strategy condition did see themselves as higher in leadership and personal influence than members in groups where strategy discussions were ignored or discouraged in the experimental conditions (Hackman and Morris, 1978: 42-43).

The defining phase is also relevant to the concept of definition of the situation, a prominent part of symbolic interaction social psychology since W. I. Thomas enunciated it some sixty years ago. But it has been a concept that has not often been subjected to empirical examination, perhaps due to difficulties in studying how persons go about defining situations. Although the definition of the situation has been used primarily in connection with individuals, the legitimacy of using it in connection with groups is suggested by W. I. Thomas, himself. He wrote in The Unadjusted Girl (1923: 42) that the family as well as being the smallest social unit is also the primary defining agency.

Some would be prepared to argue, however, that the rational model in which individuals or groups take time to make sense of situations which they interpret as "in need of explications" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 115), is wide of the mark for groups with a history like families. No one would disagree that families face a number of problems over their existence, and not only manage to live through them, but in some cases even resolve them in a fashion satisfactory to the members. But families being on-going groups concerned with group maintenance may only try to handle the most recalcitrant features of the situation whether or not they perceive them as problematical, so they can resume pressing routine group activities. As Weick (1971) suggests, families are characterized by large quantities of unfinished business. Instead of focusing on those aspects of the situation that are not routine, family members will dwell upon its similarity to prior happenings. This past experience provides the vehicle for defining the situation as being familiar. These experiences particularly in families may be activated by what Hewett and Hall (1973) call quasi-theories. These are ritualized expressions tapping the family's shared experiences which permit them to define the situation in terms of some familiar causal explanation. The situation then becomes routine and so manageable (Sprey, 1973). Yet there has been little research specifically directed to the issue of whether or not families follow the rational model of defining what it is about a situation that makes it problematic and whether the definition phase increases their satisfaction with the problem solving process.

What evidence we have on whether families do engage in an initial problem defining stage suggests that this stage may not always be explicit. Reiss (1981: 67) concludes from observational studies of families that the orientation phase is composed of the subtle transmission of feelings in the interaction among the family members. This phase occurs within the first minutes of the families entering the problem solving situation. His research, however, was more concerned with families' general approaches to tasks rather than how they dealt with tasks themselves. Guttman, Markman and Notarius (1977), however, in their studies of problem solving among married couples found they generally did begin their discussions with providing information about the problem or their feelings about it.

It should not be overlooked, however, that the kind of problems families face may well affect whether or not they spend time defining them. At present, there appears to be no satisfactory classification of group tasks according to their requirements for solution. Hackman (Hackman and Morris, 1978: 43) found that strategy discussions which could involve problem definition increased group problem solving effectiveness only when the task at hand required the coordination and sharing of group member activities.

This paper, therefore, is concerned with problem definition in families. The specific topic is whether or not families confronted as a group by a series of possibly problematic situations engage in a problem definition phase before going to possible solution strategies. This phase or its absence will then be related to their members' satisfaction with how the family did in the session, a seldom considered linkage.

To explain families' satisfaction, other variables relevant to problem solving in addition to their behaviors while addressing the problematic situations must be taken into account. One important group of variables concerns interpersonal relations, specifically those having to do with communication, power and affection giving. The available research on families' problem solving abilities shows that the most effective families were those in which all members expressed opinions and described their thoughts. When one or two family members, usually parents, monopolized the conversation leaving the third, often the adolescent child, little opportunity to speak, s/he said little when addressed. Such families did less well (Straus, 1968; Tallman and Miller, 1974). Problem solving is better when all potential sources of ideas are tapped. (See Hoffman, 1965, and Kelley and Grzelak, 1972, for evidence on this point from small group research).

The clinical literature comparing so-called normal families with those having a schizophrenic member presents another factor relevant to problem definition, the degree to which families' verbal interactions are structured. It appears that normal families are more apt to show "moderate amounts of variability in speech patterns" (Mishler and Waxler, 1968: 168). Such variability is useful for encouraging the introduction of new information for the family to consider as well as for maintaining the family's interest in the task. When family interaction is repetitious enough in its patterning to establish and conform to members' expectations, it limits their ability to deal with new situations (Fiske and Maddi, 1961). In addition, disadvantaged members' possible contributions in asymmetric communication networks are lost. This would also be the case when particular family members monopolized the conversation through "holding the floor" thereby effectively preventing others from participating.

Positive intergenerational relations which make members feel comfortable and willing to participate also can be relevant to problem solving. The importance of good parent-child relations for sons' problem solving ability as indicated by the amount of time parents spent with them appears early as shown in the findings of a study using four-year-old boys (Ries and Gold, 1977). These findings also indicate the need to consider marital relations in studying families (Doane, 1978). Mothers with more satisfactory marriages spent more time with their children. Other evidence concerning family problem solving shows middle class families to be more equalitarian and accepting of the children's autonomy (Straus, 1971; Tallman and Miller, 1974).

Gender of child, as well, influences parent-child relations in a way affecting family problem solving. Girls, in the past, were less often socialized to take initiative or to show intellectual competence. But countering this negative effect on their problem solving efforts was the greater affection parents, particularly in the working class, customarily showed daughters in such situations (Straus, 1967). The limited evidence we have shows sons do better than daughters in family problem solving situations (Straus, 1971). Parents' encouraging competence more than giving affection appears to be related to children's problem solving, perhaps because greater parental affection makes for conscientiousness and not cognitive skills (Stewart, 1976).

Marital power is another interpersonal variable related to family problem solving. As already noted, previous research on families' problem solving indicates that working-class families do less well than middle-class families with solutions calling for members to discover and use different game strategies (Straus, 1968; Tallman and Miller, 1974). The greater education middle-class persons generally possess that gives them a greater knowledge base to draw upon for ideas relevant to defining problems and their solutions, is one reason for this finding. There also appears to be more emphasis on father dominance in the working class which would have a dampening influence on other members' presenting ideas or opinions. It also appeared, however, that working-class husbands were less successful in problem solving the greater wives' power, while the reverse held true in middle-class families. Moreover, the low-power husbands appeared to their children to be less happy in their marriages (Kolb and Straus, 1974). Their failure to fulfill traditional gender role stereotypes may have accounted for these associations. Craddock (1980) in a more recent study using only married couples having varying occupational statuses found couples showed less conflict under conditions where power was not centralized in one person. In any case, marital power and marital satisfaction appear to affect problem solving relevant to problem definition. For these reasons, the wife's employment outside the home needs to be included in an examination of how families handle problem situations. Wives with paychecks generally tend to possess more power in families than do housewives (Hofferth and Moore, 1979).

Families are rarely fortunate enough to have one problem at a time to handle, but the effect of these other problems has seldom been taken into account. Situations that are problematic in families' perceptions generally exist in the context of other problems. This "embeddedness" in ongoing concerns and activities can affect family problem solving strategies (Weick, 1971). To view problematic situations with some equanimity and take the time to examine what makes the situations disturbing before going to a solution assumes families are not involved with other problems demanding attention. Families' perception of problems as pleasurable opportunities for demonstrating problem solving skills also demands that families have been able to manage their past problems in a satisfactory way and are not overwhelmed by them (Aldous, 1971). Family members' feelings about each other, it would appear, can also be negatively affected by the ongoing budget of problems. Thus, the number of problems families see as ones they are currently facing colors their approach to new situations they view as problems.

THE RESEARCH MODEL

Because so little research has been done on problem definition despite its conceptual interest and relevance to outcomes of the problem solving process, the research model depicted in Figure 1 necessarily goes beyond the available evidence. The previous research on group or family problem solving, it should be noted as in the present investigation, posits varying participation of members who together are facing a problematic situation. The way the situation is handled may involve all the members, but then again some may simply go along, giving neither their assent or dissent. This research, therefore, focuses on the satisfaction family members feel about a session in which they were confronted as a unit with possibly problematic situations. In this way, the dependent variable allows for the varying participation of family members, even though the term family problem definition is used to describe the process.

(FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE)

The independent variable of greatest interest in the study is the degree to which family members engage in problem definition. It is hypothesized according to the rational method of problem solving to be positively related to members' satisfaction with the way the family dealt with the problematical situations, the dependent variable. Yet, as we have seen, families involved in a continuing agenda of problems may lack the time or the interest to sustain problem definition and go immediately to problem solving. In an attempt to encompass some of the thinking relevant to whether or not families engage in defining behavior, other variables have been added in a tentative temporal order.

Class, gender of child and maternal employment take precedence over the other independent variables. Family problems and marital power are specified as coming next followed by family members' feelings for each other. Communication style then appears directly affecting problem definition behavior with the latter most directly relating to members' satisfaction with how the family did in confronting the problematic situations.

An issue concerning this temporal order has to do with placing problems and power before affective relations. Our rationale is that the power structure of a family is particularly salient to problem solving as shown by the research evidence reviewed above. Decisions must be made as to which problem definitions to accept and whether to try to solve the problem and with what strategy. The habitual role relations activated in the problematic situation can affect members' feelings of affection for each other through the amount of participation in the process the power relations permit. Power relations established over time through members dealing with family problems would be less subject to change due to feelings of affection. In the same vein, the agenda of problems, particularly if family members do not believe that they have been effective in past problem solving, poses a threat to family relations. Positive feelings can soften the impact of problems and lessen the number having to do with interpersonal relations but have little effect on the incidence of other problems. Thus, the research on the effects of the Great Depression shows how family members' ties were adversely influenced when they experienced a disproportionate decline in income with resultant changes in the family power structure (Elder, 1974; 110-113).

In analyzing specific components of the model and their relationships, let us begin with class. The class variable and the education and social prestige it reflects the literature suggests, operate positively on problem definition independently as well as through negatively affecting paternal power. Higher class fathers at least in problem solving situations appear to operate on a more equalitarian basis (Tallman and Miller, 1974). Class is also hypothesized as being negatively related to the number of problems families have. Mothers' employment also has a negative effect on fathers' power. The final variable in this group, gender of child, affects problem definition with some suggestion that sons do better in problem definition.

When one turns to father's power and family problems, the next group of variables, the rationale for their relationship is as follows. Fathers' power and family affection appear to be negatively related; power is associated with respect not affection. The number of problems also influences negatively members' feelings about each other.

Power and problems affect communication behavior. Higher fathers' power leads to their greater floor holding as well as more structure in verbal communication. There would be less variability in member participation. The number of family problems also would be positively related to this degree of structure and to members' floor holding.

Affectionate relations among family members, the next variable group, should encourage all members to play a part in the problem process, and so members would engage in less floor holding. Positive family relations will also be associated with less structured verbal interaction. Both communication variables of floor holding and communication structure would then be negatively related to problem definition. It, according to the rational model, is positively related to members' satisfaction with the way the family handled problems.

THE STUDY

Sample and Methodology. To examine the issue of families engaging in problem defining behavior, an observational study is appropriate. Presenting families with lists of problems from which to check those they had experienced would bypass the definition stage. To ask families directly how they decided which situations they experienced were problems, would have made the research dependent on families' memories, and liable to socially desirable responses. Participant observation would have entailed the difficulty of obtaining the consent of families to being observed over an indefinite period, since we could not predict when problematical situations would arise among the families. The strategy in this study, therefore, was to use observation of families in a structured setting as the method of data collection. Families were presented with a series of familiar family events which they could choose to discuss and which they might or might not perceive as problematical.[1]

The sample for the study consisted of 48 white families comprised of the natural parents and their ninth grade offspring. They were selected by a random process from lists of students attending junior high schools drawing from upper-middle-class and working-class neighborhoods in a large midwestern city. The families were divided into equal segments by class, whether or not

the mother was employed outside the home, and gender of child.[2] They were brought into a living room-like setting. Each family was given a set of 17 familiar family events which had been pretested for interest and salience to families. They could choose to discuss or not to discuss each situation and they might or might not perceive each as problematical.[3]

Some of the situations, as presented to the family members by a voice on a tape recorder which they controlled, were the following:

a) This is the bank book for your savings account. It shows that you took $300.00 out of the bank and you have $56.00 left in your account.
b) The husband has been notified his duties at work are going to change.
c) The teenager and one of the other children argue with each other a lot. They do not cooperate with each other when they are asked to do things around the house.
d) The Internal Revenue Service in its random check of income tax returns is going over your returns for the last three years and will need your records from those years.[4]

Families' spontaneous comments such as, "They certainly knew our family," or "They must have overheard us," supplied some indication that the situations were familiar to families.

The families considered each situation separately, could take as long as they liked and were encouraged to skip any situations they had no thoughts or feelings about. This procedure biased the findings in favor of the rational perspective. Families had time to define each situation if they so desired. They were under no pressure to consider a certain number of events within a restricted period. The situations were not a part of the minutiae of daily living which distracts family members' attention from any one situation (Weick, 1971: 9). This presentation procedure encouraged all family members to participate in dealing with the situations if they so desired. There was no need for one person to present a solution so the family could move on to another. The families knew they were being observed and what they had to say tape recorded.

Observational Data. Each family member's remarks concerning the situation were categorized into three general categories. The categories were the following: 1) a solution perspective with two codes in which members presented specific actions for handling the situation or broached the need to do something about the situation; 2) an evaluation perspective with five codes in which members specifically mentioned whether they perceived the situation they were considering as not occurring to the family, whether it was a problem, or would not be a problem, and their positive or negative evaluation of it; 3) an analytical perspective with three codes in which members analyzed the possible causes or consequences of the situation and brought up relevant experiences.

Reliability of the two coders was checked when they began transcript coding, and when they had completed half the transcripts to insure continued congruence of categorization. The reliability measures were taken from Sears (1951). It was:

$$(r) = \frac{2 \times \text{\# agreements between the two coders}}{\text{total statements coded by the two coders}}$$

The results of the first test showed the two code comparisons below .80 to be "negative evaluation", .77, and "not happening to family", .75. The second reliability test resulted in one code comparison, "need to solve the problem", .75, falling below .80.

To capture the interaction of the family members as well as the progression of individual member's remarks, Gottman and associates' (1977) sequential analysis of verbal behavior procedure was used to detect patterns of particular remarks and responses as categorized above. To obtain a usable number of sequences, the analysis was restricted to two consecutive verbal statements as categorized according to the verbal schema. This unit could involve the statements of one family member or involve two members.

The criteria used for demarcating the patterns from random sequences of remarks were the following: there had to be at least four examples of the particular sequence consisting of a remark and a response whether the sequence was made by one person or involved two persons; the transition probability of the particular code following the initial criterion behavior was .07; and the z-score of the test for conditional against unconditional probabilities was at least 1.645.

INDICATORS OF VARIABLES

Social Class and Related Variables. The social class variable was determined in the following fashion. Families in which fathers were in professional, technical or managerial categories according to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1965) were classified as upper-middle-class; families with fathers in the service, processing, machine trade, benchwork and structural work categories, excepting foremen in all categories, were considered working class. Additional indicators were taken from questionnaire information family members completed separately after the observational sessions. Husbands and wives checked here how many years of education they had completed.

Family Problems. The respondents could also check from a list of 24 problems those they had seen as problems within the family during the last year. Problems in the list included such items as health of the family members, lack of closeness between husband and wife, amount of income and behavior of children. The median number of problems checked by the family members was as follows: fathers, 4; mothers, 5; and adolescents, 4.

Interpersonal Relations. The power indicators came from husbands' and wives' separate responses to questions having to do with who made the following decisions: 1) What the family will have for dinner. 2) Whether a family member is sick enough to call a doctor. 3) What type of clothes the spouse will buy. 4) What to spend on food. The responses constituted a five-point scale ranging from "husband always" to wife always" with higher scores referring to "wife always". The item responses were added together for each spouse to preserve the differential power perceptions of husbands and wives (McDonald, 1980: 845). Cronbach's alpha for husbands was .64 (.64 Standardized) and for wives .57 (.58 Standardized).

To ascertain the quality of family relationships, there was an indicator of degree of general marital satisfaction. Husbands and wives circled a point on a seven point continuum ranging from "very unhappy" to "very happy" with higher scores referring to the latter. The satisfactoriness of parent-adolescent relations according to parents' perceptions was established

from their responses to the following statements: 1) If my teenager has a problem, s/he can count on me to help him/her out. 2) I say nice things about him/her. 3) I teach him/her things s/he wants to learn. 4) I make him/her feel I am there if s/he needs me. The responses on a five-point scale from "never" to "very often" were added together. Higher scores were more positive. Cronbach's alpha for fathers was .75 and for mothers .45. (Unless two scores are given, it means standardized and unstandardized scores are the same.)

The teenagers' views of adolescent-parent relations were taken from the formers' responses to the following three questions: 1) Do your parents give you the attention you think they should? 2) Do you talk over your personal problems with your parents? 3) Do your parents treat you the way you think you should be treated? Their responses ranged from "never" to "always" and were added together. Higher scores indicated more satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha was .70.

Communication Factors. Several types of observed verbal behaviors as coded using sequential analysis were used in the analysis. The degree to which members "held the floor" and other members did not take the opportunity or were prevented from responding to their remarks was one such indicator. The proportion of the family's conversational patterns as determined above in which the member responded to his/her own remark constituted this indicator.

The indicator for problem definition behavior provided data on family members' conformity to the rational model of problem solving. It consisted of how often each member looked at other aspects of the situation to define it prior to going to solution strategies. The proportion of each member's solution perspective statements preceded by evaluation or analytical code statements by him/herself or others constituted this indicator of the solution oriented sequences. The indicator is a broad one and for that reason could be considered as being biased in favor of the rational model of problem solving in terms of families engaging in problem definition before going on to problem solution. (There were not sufficient data to permit this analysis with the adolescents' solution perspective statements.) Finally, the ratio between patterned sequences of verbal behaviors and random sequences of comments and responses in families was included in the analysis as an indicator of each family's structured verbal communication.

The dependent variable was each family member's satisfaction with how their family did at the session. The indicator consisted of a six point continuum ranging from "very satisfied" to one point below "OK". Although others doing observational research have found their sample members show generally high levels of satisfaction with the observational sessions (Craddock, 1980: 194; Olson, 1970: 447), this was less true in this study. Twelve (25%) of the adolescents, 21 (46%) of wives, and 17 (36%) of husbands marked the "OK" and lower points.

Data Analysis. The model in Figure 1 lends itself most directly to an evaluation by path analysis. The temporal sequencing of the variables in the model as developed in the theoretical discussion and the signs for the proposed relationships are included in the model. All of the variables in the model are measured at an interval level of measurement with the exception of the exogenous variables. These are social class, mother's employment and teen gender.

The overall model includes a number of variables representing each of the family member's scores for the endogenous variables in the model permitting an analysis of the model based on how well it fits the data for each member. There is enough interrelationship among the measures for the three family members so the system model clearly relates to the family interaction patterns.

As was noted in the research model section, the temporal relationship among family problems and, parental power and the family members' affection relations is not as well established as are the remaining stages in the model. This would lead one to consider the use of a nonrecursive model to examine the interrelationships between variables in these stages. The small number of cases and the lack of a clearly identified model using the order criteria (Asher, 1976), led to the decision first to test the hypothesized recursive model. It represents the posited relationships according to the existing research. The model is within the limits of the data, given its large number of equations.

RESULTS

The theoretical model presented in Figure 1 was tested using ordinary least squares regression (OLS). The model is complex in that it is tested using 19 equations on 22 variables. Only a few of the variables were multiple indicator or scale variables and due to the lack of reliability estimates, more sophisticated estimation techniques were not considered. This translates into an assumption of negligible measurement error for the variables in the path model.

(TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE)

The analysis revealed that the research model was not supported in a number of respects.[5] Table 1 displays the OLS results. Taking the variables in the temporal order of the model depicted in Figure 1, we find the exogenous variables of social class and mothers' employment had no appreciable effect on power. (It should be remembered that higher scores on the power indicator refer to wives' having more decision making power.) Family social class, as hypothesized, does seem to have a negative effect on the number of family problems, but only significantly for those fathers reported.

The next set of relationships have to do with family problems and fathers' power. Family problems do influence significantly the affection patterns, and these paths, as we predicted, are generally negative. The power measures influence only fathers' views of their affection for their children. The directions of these paths, however, are inconsistent. When fathers report they have more power, they view their relations with their children as more satisfactory. But mothers' reports of marital power show the hypothesized positive effect of fathers' lesser power on fathers' affection for their adolescents.

Moving on to the group of communication variables, we see that father-adolescent relations and fathers' marital satisfaction does influence fathers' floor holding. The directions for these paths, however, are not always the same. In general, parental power or family members' feelings about each other does not predict family members' floor holding as specified in this model.

Verbal communication structure is significantly related only to youths' reports of their relations with parents. Although the path is in the direction anticipated, there is no consistent negative relationship between verbal communication structure and the other affection patterns.

Problem definition behavior shows contradictory influences depending upon which parent is involved. Fathers' having sons present at the session significantly influences their problem definition behavior but teen gender does not influence such behavior in wives. (In these analyses, sons were scored one and daughters two.) Class did not show a significant association with problem definition behavior. Mothers' problem definition behaviors were most affected by what went on during the session, but in a fashion contrary to that hypothesized. The more floor holding behavior they maintained and the more structured their families' verbal communication the more problem definition in which they engaged.

When we turn to the results using the dependent variable of members' satisfaction with how the family did at the session, mothers' problem definition behavior, as hypothesized, is positively related to problem definition for adolescents with a trend in the same direction among fathers. Fathers' problem definition behavior, however, does not significantly affect members' satisfaction, and for the parents the trend is contrary to the one hypothesized.

REVISED MODEL RESULTS

These mixed findings led to the development of a revised model of family interaction. It permitted the introduction of feedback between fathers' and mothers' problems and fathers' and mothers' marital satisfaction. The introduction of a limited amount of feedback in the model was facilitated by a reduction in the number of endogenous variables and the addition of new exogenous variables, fathers' education and mothers' education.[6] The limited feedback was supported by the order criteria for identification and was estimated using three stage least squares regression (3SLS). This technique allows for correlation between the residuals in the two pairs of equations which are estimated using non-recursive equations. Additionally, the non-significant paths were removed from the model with the exception of those paths which were well supported in the literature and those based on the rarely collected observational data. New paths were added where strong bivariate correlations were present and where the path was consistent with the theoretical framework developed earlier. One notable change in the revised model due to the elimination of non-significant was to remove the power measures as dependent variables. There were no satisfactory explanatory variables for these dependent variables. They were retained as exogenous variables.

The revised model is presented in Table 2. The model was run under

(TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE)

the S.YSREG procedure in the SAS package (Helwig, 1979). The output from this procedure includes T-ratios rather than F-ratios. Significance of the ratios is again indicated with the appropriate asterisks. The equations for fathers' problems and fathers' marital satisfaction had correlated errors of

.52, and the equations for mothers' problems and mothers' marital satisfaction had correlated errors of .23. These correlations substantiate the use of 3SLS for estimating these equations.[7]

Both mothers' and adolescents' reports of family problems are now significantly predicted in the revised model. Feedback from fathers' marital satisfaction, although not significant, is the strongest path to fathers' reports of family problems and is negative in sign. Feedback from mothers' marital satisfaction is very significantly related to mothers' reports of problems and is also negative in direction. Youths' family problems reports are increased by mothers' not being employed outside the home and fathers' holding more decision making power. (Mothers' employment outside the home was scored one; their being not employed for wages was scored two.)

Factors affecting family members' ties of affection in this model remain much the same. Parents' power perceptions continue to produce different findings. Mothers' perceptions of fathers as holding power is negatively related to father-youth relations in the hypothesized direction. The feedback of mothers' problems also remains a negative influence. Fathers' and adolescents family problems reports are a significant negative influence on youths' reports of their relations with parents as was expected. Mothers' marital satisfaction is only significantly associated with fathers' problems and fathers' marital satisfaction is only significantly related to mothers' problems in these feedback relations but the direction in both cases is negative as hypothesized.

The floor holding results also present no surprises. As predicted, fathers' lack of marital satisfaction influenced their floor holding and the same was true of the number of family problems youths checked and their mothers' floor holding. But the positive effect of fathers' getting along with their adolescents and fathers' floor holding, along with fathers' seeing mothers and not themselves holding power and mothers' floor holding, was not consistent with the model.

Verbal communication structure is significantly predicted and shows some change. Fathers' education, a new variable, negatively predicts it. Adolescents' negative views of their ties with their parents continues to encourage it, as hypothesized.

When one looks at problem definition behavior, the new model continues to show similar results with the original model. The theoretical rationale is not supported among mothers. Their floor holding and families' possessing a more structured verbal communication pattern positively influences mothers' problem definition behavior. As hypothesized, however, fathers' having sons at the session,as was true in the first model, positively affected fathers' problem solving behavior. A new result was the negative effect father teen relations had on fathers' problem definition behavior.

Test of the final stage of the model produced some new findings. The amount of explained variance in fathers' satisfaction with the way their families did at the session increased considerably. The variables of fathers' marital satisfaction and fathers' floor holding newly introduced here positively influenced their satisfaction. Their problem definition behavior is significant now in its relation, but, contrary to the theory, is a negative effect. Teens' floor holding is negatively related to fathers' satisfaction with the session, although this relationship is weak. Mothers' problem

definition behavior is no longer significant in this model. The only variable in the model which is significantly related to adolescents' satisfaction with the session continues to be mothers' problem definition behavior. This relationship is both strong and positive as would be hypothesized. Among mothers, there is a slight trend in this model for their marital satisfaction to influence positively their feelings about their families' performance at the session.

DISCUSSION

The results provide little satisfaction for those positing a rational model of problem solving, among groups, where a problem definition phase is the focus and the dependent variable is family members' satisfaction with how they did in a session involving potentially problematical situations. Although the operationalization of such a phase was defined broadly, when tests were made of an original and a revised model based on existing literature, there was no consistent support for its contributing to family members' positive feelings. In fact, the more fathers' preceded solution oriented statements with analytical or evaluative statements, the indicator of problem definition, the more dissatisfied they were with their particular family's performance. In addition, problem definition behavior was not associated with mothers' satisfaction.

Adolescents did prove an exception to the generally negative findings. Mothers' problem solving definition behavior but not fathers' did influence adolescents' satisfaction positively. The youths themselves, however, engaged in too little problem definition behavior to permit an analysis of its relationship with family members' satisfaction and among all families, of the 845 two unit statements ending in solution perspective codes, just 93 (11%) were preceded by analytical or evaluative statements the indicator of problem definition behavior.

In attempting to explain the difference in the reaction of parents and youths, it is necessary to examine what the sessions represented to the two generations. For these parents how they got along with each other rather than the way they went about handling the situations as shown by the positive effect of their marital satisfaction on their session satisfaction. Fathers also were happier when they held the floor and the adolescents did not, thereby having time to express their views and go right to a solution rather than examining the characteristics of the situations. Adolescents' satisfaction had more to do with the problem solving process itself with mothers' problem solving behavior being more important than fathers', reflecting perhaps the closer affection ties youths generally have with their mothers (Thurnher, Spence, and Lowenthal, 1974: 316).

The question of why problem definition had a negative effect on fathers' satisfaction and seemingly no effect on mothers' satisfaction, however, continues to arise. The use of families in this study with their histories of problems and problem solving strategies along with the interpersonal structures that keep them organized, could be a factor. Fathers, for example, may have resented the time it took to talk about the problematic situations rather than going immediately to a solution.

The research design also could have been an influence. Making the dependent variable members' satisfaction with their families' performance as opposed to a judgment of the effectiveness of problem solutions may account for some of the difference in findings from the scant previous research. The situations families faced in the session planned to fall within the range families can experience could have been too familiar to elicit a need for the sample to engage in problem definition. Some doubt is cast on this explanation, however, by the presence in the situation agenda of items out of the ordinary like searches for drugs in school lockers, I.R.A. tax audits, teenage pregnancy and changes in management at husbands' place of employment along with more usual happenings. Families' knowledge that they were being observed could have played a part. But families were urged not to spend time on situations in which they had little interest, so their performance in the situations they did choose to discuss was not perfunctory.

The type of situations presented to the families, it is true, required discussion and this could have affected the findings. They were not production tasks for which all members had to perform some activity and where these activities had to be coordinated. The discussion topics, however, did tap the differential knowledge of the family members so that their collective efforts in the session were important. Moreover, some of the situations were complex enough to encourage members' consideration of their characteristics before going to a solution.

As far as specific interpersonal relationships were concerned, the findings indicated the importance of including families' problems as a variable in research dealing with their problem solving strategies and feelings about the process. Problems as hypothesized were generally negatively related to the quality of family members' relationships. But the temporal order of quality of marital relations and problems, contrary to what was originally hypothesized, as measured by feedback loops indicated marital satisfaction had more to do with the number of family problems husbands and wives perceived than the reverse. It was the more interesting that marital satisfaction appeared to be more influential, since problems as operationalized had a temporal dimension of a year while the other variable had no such specification.

Another finding concerning problems had to do with the negative relation between the number of family problems adolescents perceived and their mothers' employment outside the home. Nor did gender of youth make a difference. The usual more positive influence of maternal employment on daughters did not appear (Moore and Hofferth, 1979). Instead, maternal employment had an equally benign effect on both sons' and daughters' views of family problems. However, curiously, this association did not affect youths' relations with their parents, although the more problems they checked that their families faced the less happy they were with their parents. These youths of the early 1970s appeared to separate their feelings toward their parents from mothers' employment status, and the latter even a decade ago appeared to be associated with youths' perceptions of fewer family problems.

Neither class nor the marital decision making structure had much effect on the results, contrary to the original rationale based on the existing literature. In addition, class as measured by fathers' occupations or both parents' education also did not prove to be a strong explanatory factor.

This was true even though the occupations sampled were divided between blue collar and professional and managerial categories to sharpen the comparison. Fathers' power did operate, as hypothesized, to lower the quality of their relations with their sons and daughters. And the more they saw their wives as making decisions, the more these wives held the floor, an indicator which would seem to support the husbands' judgments.

The research provided a few clues as to what encourages problem definition behavior. What clues we have come from the fathers' data and again point up the importance of interpersonal relations. In this case, unsatisfactory intergenerational relationships as evaluated by fathers seem to encourage their problem definition behavior. The presence of their children and consciousness of their possible disapproval may make fathers more aware of the need to present a rationale for their strategies. In addition, contrary to the initial research model, it appears that when parents take the center of the family conversational stage and hold the floor uninterruptedly, they do more problem defining. Apparently, they then have the opportunity to present reasons for situations and do not limit themselves to voicing possible solutions. In this case, perhaps, a judicious application of the dictum children and spouses should be seen and not heard is in order.

The results of the study, disappointing as they are with respect to the importance of a problem defining phase for family members' satisfaction with their handling of the problematical situations they were given, do provide some substantive and methodological insights. They underscore the influence of ties among members for their evaluation of their family's instrumental performance when working together as a group. They also indicate the importance of processual variables as affecting family problem solving outcome variables and, therefore, the value of observational research. Through such research, we can see the interaction of families, interaction that leads to problem solving and reflects the organizational structures that make families the tentative units they are.

FIGURE 1

HYPOTHESIZED PATHS IN THE EXPLANATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR HANDLING OF PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS

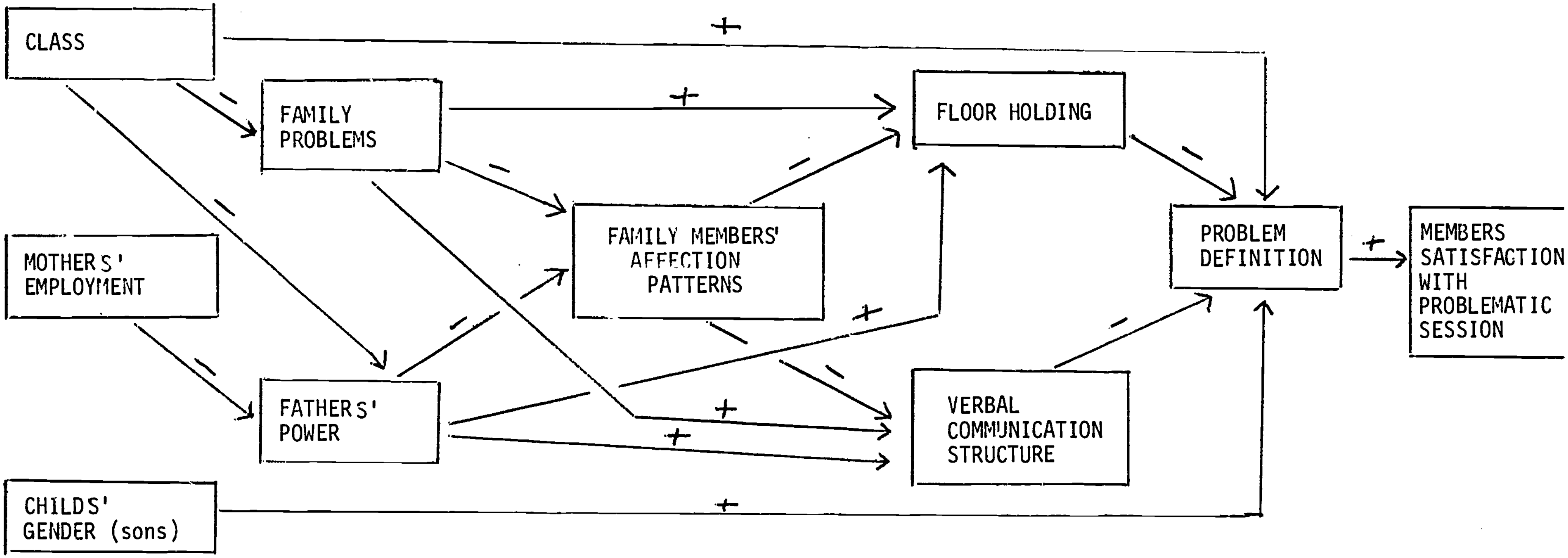

TABLE 1 TEST OF THE RESEARCH MODEL

Dependent and Independent Variables		F-Value	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions			.03
X_1	Family Social Class	.553	.11	
X_2	Mothers' Employment	.970	.14	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions			.01
X_1	Family Social Class	.475	-.10	
X_2	Mothers' Employment	.053	-.03	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports			.15**
X_1	Family Social Class	4.608**	-.30	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports			.04
X_1	Family Social Class	.636	-.12	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports			.004
X_1	Family Social Class	.218	-.07	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations			.26**
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	7.485***	-.51	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	7.582***	.51	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	.535	-.10	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	8.483***	-.42	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Rpts.	.053	-.03	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations			.13
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	.513	.14	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	.074	.05	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	.372	-.09	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	3.529*	-.30	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Rpts.	.077	.04	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations			.48***
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	.650	.13	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	1.249	.17	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	7.251***	-.31	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	.798	-.11	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Rpts.	12.801***	-.43	

Dependent and Independent Variables		F-Value	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction			.19
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	1.984	.28	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	.215	-.09	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	2.260	-.22	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	2.398	-.24	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems' Reports	1.152	.16	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction			.27*
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	.109	-.06	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	1.194	.20	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	6.289**	-.34	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	5.752**	-.35	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	.495	.10	
Y_{11}	Fathers' Floor Holding			.46***
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	.907	.19	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	1.844	-.26	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	.000	-.00	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	.396	-.10	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	1.171	-.16	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	11.018***	.48	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations	.294	-.08	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations	.182	-.07	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	15.287***	-.58	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	.163	.07	
Y_{12}	Mothers' Floor Holding			.26
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	2.477	.36	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	.004	-.01	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	1.057	.18	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	.083	.05	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	5.631**	.42	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	1.107	.18	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations	1.004	.17	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations	1.495	.25	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	.209	.08	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	.839	-.18	

Dependent and Independent Variables		F-Value	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_{13}	Adolescents' Floor Holding			.16
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	.681	-.20	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	.903	.23	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	2.189	-.28	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	.010	-.02	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	.685	.16	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	.880	-.17	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations	.395	-.12	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations	.632	.17	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	.001	-.00	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	.222	-.10	
Y_{14}	Verbal Communication Structure			.25
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	.097	-.07	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	.229	.11	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	.025	.03	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	2.358	-.29	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	.023	-.03	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	.118	-.06	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations	.230	-.08	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations	3.723*	-.40	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	1.105	.18	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	.696	-.16	
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition			.25*
X_1	Family Social Class	2.605	.22	
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	4.339**	-.29	
Y_{11}	Fathers' Floor Holding	2.187	-.20	
Y_{12}	Mothers' Floor Holding	1.378	-.17	
Y_{13}	Adolescents' Floor Holding	.800	-.13	
Y_{14}	Verbal Communication Structure	2.333	-.22	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition			.26**
X_1	Family Social Class	.541	.10	
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	.963	-.13	
Y_{11}	Fathers' Floor Holding	1.231	.15	
Y_{12}	Mothers' Floor Holding	9.012***	.42	
Y_{13}	Adolescents' Floor Holding	.736	.12	
Y_{14}	Verbal Communication Structure	4.454**	.30	

Dependent and Independent Variables		F-Value	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_{17}	Fathers' Satisfaction with Session			.10*
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition	2.118	-.21	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition	2.926*	.24	
Y_{18}	Mothers' Satisfaction with Session			.04
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition	1.362	-.17	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition	.606	.12	
Y_{19}	Adolescents' Satisfaction with Session			.21***
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition	.874	.12	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition	11.385***	.45	

Significance Levels

*	.10
**	.05
***	.01

TABLE 2 RESULTS OF THE REVISED MODEL

Dependent and Independent Variables		T-Ratio	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports			.16[a] *
X_1	Family Social Class	-0.49	-.09	
X_2	Mothers' Employment	.35	.04	
X_4	Fathers' Education	-1.36	-.22	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	-1.40	-.56[c]	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports			.26[b]***
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	.19	.03	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	1.41	.22	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	-3.63***	-1.01[c]	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports			.22***
X_2	Mothers' Employment	2.16**	.29	
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	1.27	.17	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	-2.50***	-.34	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations			.25***
X_1	Family Social Class	-.28	-.04	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	-2.68***	-.47	
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	2.67***	.49	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	-3.20***	-.45	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations			.15
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	.74	.11	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	1.34	.19	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	-1.36	.23	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	.40	.07	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations			.49***
X_2	Mothers' Employment	1.35	.16	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	1.62	.19	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	-3.08***	-.34	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Rpts.	-3.86***	-.46	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction			.17[a]*
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	1.04	.14	
X_5	Mothers' Education	1.37	.22	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	-0.48	-.21[c]	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	-2.20**	-.28[c]	

Dependent and Independent Variables		T-Ratio	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction			.25[b]***
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	1.54	.30	
X_4	Fathers' Education	1.59	.23	
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	-1.91*	-.28	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	.53	.29[c]	
Y_{11}	Fathers' Floor Holding			.40***
Y_2	Mothers' Power Perceptions	-1.58	-.18	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	3.99***	.47	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	-4.19***	-.49	
Y_{12}	Mothers' Floor Holding			.23**
X_5	Mothers' Education	1.64	.23	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	2.45**	.35	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	2.43**	.34	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	-0.29	-.04	
Y_{13}	Adolescents' Floor Holding			.08
X_2	Mothers' Employment	-1.33	-.19	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations	-1.18	-.17	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations	1.31	.19	
Y_{14}	Verbal Communication Structure			.20**
X_4	Fathers' Education	-1.76*	-.24	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	-.21	-.03	
Y_8	Adolescents' Parent Relations	-2.36**	-.38	
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition			.24**
X_1	Family Social Class	1.48	.20	
X_3	Adolescents' Gender	-1.68*	-.23	
Y_5	Adolescents' Family Problems Reports	-.92	-.12	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	-2.08**	-.28	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition			.28**
X_4	Fathers' Education	.67	.10	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	1.21	.17	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	-.83	-.11	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	.68	.10	
Y_{12}	Mothers' Floor Holding	2.46**	.34	
Y_{14}	Verbal Communication Structure	1.83*	.26	

Dependent and Independent Variables		T-Ratio	Beta	Percent Explained Variance (R^2)
Y_{17}	Fathers' Satisfaction with Session			.45***
X_2	Mothers' Employment	1.23	.15	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	-.41	-.06	
Y_9	Fathers' Marital Satisfaction	3.78***	.60	
Y_{11}	Fathers' Floor Holding	2.21**	.35	
Y_{13}	Adolescents' Floor Holding	-1.67*	-.21	
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition	-2.38**	-.32	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition	.23	.03	
Y_{18}	Mothers' Satisfaction with Session			.14
Y_3	Fathers' Family Problems Reports	1.60	.35	
Y_4	Mothers' Family Problems Reports	1.52	.31	
Y_7	Mother Adolescent Relations	.94	.15	
Y_{10}	Mothers' Marital Satisfaction	1.87*	.50	
Y_{15}	Fathers' Problem Definition	-.86	-.13	
Y_{19}	Adolescents' Satisfaction with Session			.29**
X_4	Fathers' Education	1.43	.21	
X_5	Mothers' Education	-.16	-.02	
Y_1	Fathers' Power Perceptions	1.02	.15	
Y_6	Father Adolescent Relations	-.23	-.03	
Y_{12}	Mothers' Floor Holding	-1.62	-.24	
Y_{16}	Mothers' Problem Definition	3.26***	.47	

[a]weighted R^2 for system Y_3 Y_9 = .22

[b]weighted R^2 for system Y_4 Y_{10} = .35

[c]These parameter estimates are unstandardized 3SLS estimates. The standardized values for these estimates are currently undetermined in the statistical literature.

Significance Levels

*	.10
**	.05
***	.01

FOOTNOTES

[1]For the recurring issue of validity of observational studies, see Aldous, 1974 and White, 1977.

[2]The over-all refusal rate was 62.5 percent. The rate was highest among families where mothers were employed and in the working-class group. Reasons the families gave for refusing had to do with lack of time and the difficulty of finding an occasion convenient for all three family members.

[3]The situations had been evaluated by ten graduate students majoring in the family area and five family specialists. They are designed to vary as follows: the duration of the problem; the seriousness of the problem; the source of the situation being external or internal to the family; whether the situation was specific to the family or was a societal one; and, when the situation did not involve the family as a unit, the member affected. The procedure used for presenting the situations stems from Frederiksen (1966). See Aldous (in press) for a detailed analysis of the way families dealt with a situation involving a birth control announcement.

[4]Working class families with employed wives were more apt not to discuss situations, particularly those whose cause involved parents. They skipped an average of ten situations of which eight involved parents. Working class and middle class families whose wives were not employed outside the home skipped the next highest number of situations. Each group passed over an average of eight situations of which four involved parents.

[5]Because of the small sample and the scarcity of previous work on problem definition, a few results not meeting the conventional .05 level of significance but of theoretical interest will be given.

[6]The model was also tested incorporating feedback between adolescent problems and the adolescents' perceived relations with their parents and between the fathers' and mothers' power and their marital satisfaction. These paths proved to be non-significant.

[7]Multicollinearity was not considered a problem in this model due to the relatively low interrelations between the independent variables in each equation.

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